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Brooke F Adams 10/09/2006 03:14:50 PM From DB/Inbox: Brooke F Adams

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 00569

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RHMFISS/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0455
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0281
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 0307
RUEHVT/AMEMBASSY VALLETTA 0118
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0006
RUEHAE/AMEMBASSY ASMARA 0033
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TRIPOLI 000569

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/MAG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/3/2016
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SUBJECT: SOUTH KOREAN PM VISITS TRIPOLI TO PROMOTE BILATERAL TRADE

REF: SEOUL 3378

CLASSIFIED BY: Elizabeth Fritschle, Pol/Econ Chief, United States Embassy, DOS.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (U) South Korean Prime Minister Her Excellency Han Myeong-sook visited Tripoli the week of September 17-21 in association with the "Korean Libyan Business Partnership Conference 2006." The conference was organized by the Korean International Trade Union and the Libyan General Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry. At a lunch hosted by the conference organizers, PM Han addressed a crowd of 200 Libyan and Korean businessman, calling for "an acceleration of bilateral relations through business partnerships." She praised the Libyan Great Man Made River project as an example of successful cooperation between the two nations, and called for greater cooperation with particular emphasis on IT and communications equipment. She ended by expressing that "current cooperation confirms the potential for future cooperation," and that she hoped "future relations would be as smooth as the Korean cars she saw on the roads of Tripoli."

Content with Current Progress, but Still More Potential

2. (U) According to press accounts, PM Han recounted that she and Libyan leader Mu'annar Qadhafi considered the Great Man Made

River (GMMR) project to be the "eighth wonder of the world," and with continued cooperation she hoped Libya and Korea could eventually produce the ninth wonder of the world. The Koreans have a string of work encampments throughout Libya to support their construction projects and other contracts. Korean employees are typically supervising engineers who oversee the work of third country laborers. The Koreans tend to stay in Libya for six months, then return home for a one month leave period with their families. Many of these engineers have lived in Libya for ten years or longer, since their salaries of approximately double what they could earn at home.

13. (C) PM Han told the press that Korea would invite 1000 North Africans to Korea in the next three years to accelerate industry and infrastructure cooperation, and stated that Libya would be included in this program, and a part of any future North African initiatives. Korean Embassy Counselor for Political Affairs, Sang Jin Kim told P/E Chief that the Korean delegation of 121 people included 65 business representatives. He said that during the visit two agreements and four MOUs were signed. A training and information technology agreement was signed by Secretary of the General People's Committee (GPC) for Manpower, Training and Employment Matouq Matouq and the Korean Deputy FM. Kim said that the Koreans will send trainers to educate the Libyans in information technology (in English) after the Libyans provide a building for the training center. He said that the Libyans had asked for an agreement on technology transfer, with an emphasis on water desalination and power generation, and that the Koreans agreed to form a joint commission to conduct feasibility studies. (COMMENT: The Libyan's request tracks with their request made to the French, German, British and others - they are using the gambit, "show us the rewards for giving up our WMD" with all their interlocutors. END COMMENT.) The Libyans broached peaceful uses of nuclear energy with the Koreans, but at this point there are no plans for nuclear cooperation.

14. (C) The other agreement was signed by the Under Secretary of the General People's Committee for Economy, Trade and Investment, Taher Sarkez, for the promotion, guarantee and protection of investment. The MOUs focused on construction, export promotion, communications, and infrastructure development. Kim said that the Libyans complained that on the GMMR Project and other activities, the Koreans had imported too many foreign laborers "building and leaving." He said the Libyans, in every discussion, asked for more training and technology transfer. Matouq broached his proposal that in the future, Korean contractors maintain 50 percent Libyan laborers on their payrolls, with 50 percent from third countries like Bangladesh or other Islamic countries. Kim said that over the last year, Matouq's GPC staffers had presented Korean contractors with lists of employees "to be hired." He said that almost none of the proposed employment candidates were qualified, but that the Koreans hired them and "the people get a salary but they make no contributions, sometimes they don't even show up for work." During the bilateral meetings with the PM, the Koreans told Matouq that they would continue making a good faith effort to hire Libyans, but that the GPC had to allow time for Libyans to be trained and educated for specialized work before insisting on "Libyanization" of the work force.

Grand Plans, Without Any Planning To Support the Concept

15. (C) Kim also described Qadhafi's proposal to the PM that Koreans invest in a oil pipeline project routed from the Jamahiriya to Eritrea and Bab al-Medab so that Asian countries could access energy supplies from the Eastern coast of Africa. He said Qadhafi had a huge map in his Bab al- Azizia meeting room and traced off a proposed routing for the PM, but that the Koreans were totally unprepared to address the concept, especially since Qadhafi talked in generalities and did not offer any details, beyond his speculation that the Chinese and Indians would also offer up funding to build the pipeline.

16. (C) The protocol aspects of the visit were particularly

challenging, according to Kim, who described trip planning with the Libyans as a "nightmare." He said that the Libyans refused to confirm any meetings in advance of the PM's arrival and that they only had a few minutes notice before the bilateral with Qadhafi. Since the Koreans were transported to their official meetings in Libyan-provided Protocol Office Mercedes convoy (as are all visiting delegations), they had no control over the schedule or motorcade movements. Despite telling their liaison contacts in advance of the visit that the PM would not visit any memorial sites, Kim said that at the conclusion of the Qadhafi bilateral, the PM was escorted to the memorial of the U.S. bombing on the Bab al-Azizia compound and asked to sign the guestbook. He said that she would not have agreed if asked to visit, but presented with the inevitable, she wrote an innocuous statement at the memorial. He said that, reviewing other recent signatures, it appeared many African leaders had visited the memorial, as well as delegations from Pakistan and the Philippines.

17. (C) Embassy Comment: The logistical and protocolary problems which the Koreans faced are routine in Libya, and have bedeviled the French, British, Germans and many others. The Libyans are both unwilling and incapable of scheduling meetings in advance or performing other protocol functions considered standard operating procedure elsewhere. The Libyan requests to the Koreans for assistance with water desalination, power generation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy track with requests to the G8 countries and their other interlocutors. End comment.

BERRY
GOLDRICH